
Federal Agency and Federal Library Reports

National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

1111 18th St. N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036

Dorothy P. Gray
Research Associate

Early in 1987, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) held a strategic planning conference to assess progress toward its long-standing goals and to set priorities for the future. Invited speakers from the broad-based library and information community, government, and the private sector presented a variety of views on major trends and issues of concern to our "information society" today and tomorrow.

Information Policy

Government Information

Information policy became one of the priority areas for commission activity during the year. NCLIS provided a needed forum for one of the year's most controversial topics—"sensitive but not classified" government information—in the form of a hearing at the Library of Congress in which 11 witnesses debated attempts to restrict access to certain types of unclassified information in the interests of national security. Testimony from the U.S. Department of Defense, People for the American Way, American Library Association, Special Libraries Association, Association of Research Libraries, Federal Scientific and Technical Information Managers, Government Documents Round Table, Information Industry Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science will soon be published by the commission along with recommendations for future action.

Glenerin Declaration

At the last in a series of trilateral meetings on the role of information in the economy, NCLIS collaborated with the British Library and the Canadian Institute for Research on Public Policy to issue a joint statement on the value of information. Named the Glenerin Declaration after the conference site, the statement includes a list of recommended public policy initiatives to increase the societal benefits of modern information

technologies. Among the recommendations of the Glennerin Declaration are an annual "summit" meeting on information policy, standardized methods for evaluating information as an economic resource, and encouraging telecommunications providers to create facilities for enhanced information exchange among households, academic and research groups, libraries, businesses, and government.

The Impact of Information Technology

In other areas of information policy activity, NCLIS advised Congress on proposed legislation to privatize the National Technical Information Service and create new means of disseminating government information. NCLIS also worked with Senator Nunn's office and a coalition from the library/information community to consider implications of proposed legislation to create an information age commission. The result was a reaffirmation of NCLIS's role as the appropriate federal agency to address the impact of information technologies on society.

Supporting the Information Needs of U.S. Citizens

National Library Card Campaign

The commission continued its activities in support of library efforts to meet the changing needs of all U.S. citizens. In partnership with the American Library Association, NCLIS officially launched the National Library Card Campaign, a nationwide effort to encourage every school-age child in the United States to own and use a library card. Already, in the earliest phase of the campaign, several states are attempting to achieve 100 percent library card enrollment among their schoolchildren. NCLIS also assisted ALA in acquiring funding and preparing materials for the National Library Card Campaign.

Older Americans

NCLIS continued to promote awareness of the library and information needs of older Americans among service providers, policymakers, and the library/information community. At the 1987 ALA annual conference, NCLIS cosponsored a program, keynoted by Representative Claude Pepper, that dramatized the potential of professional partnerships for meeting the diverse needs of the elderly. The overflow audience called for additional programs to promote cooperation among librarians, trustees, and agencies on aging at the local level. A publication prepared for distribution at this program, entitled "Information for Successful Living: Programs That Work for Third Agers and Beyond," describes 32 library-based programs successfully assisting older adults in various parts of the country.

NCLIS Recognition Award

In order to encourage other innovative efforts that will benefit library users, NCLIS announced the establishment of an annual award to honor initiative in improving and promoting the nation's library and information services. The award will recognize the best initiative taken by an individual or nongovernmental, nonlibrary organization in improving and promoting library and information services in the previous calendar year. The first NCLIS Recognition Award will be presented in Washington, D.C., in 1988.

Other National Activities

The U.S. Bicentennial

During the first year of the celebration of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, NCLIS continued to work with the Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution to make libraries a focal point for programs and celebrations in their communities. NCLIS also set the stage for future bicentennial events by developing and submitting a proposal for funding of a proposed interactive satellite videoconference on the Constitution. This program would link constitutional experts with students at high schools and colleges around the country to discuss the role of the Constitution today.

WHCLIS II

Planning for the Second White House Conference on Library and Information Services intensified as legislation was passed by unanimous consent in both houses of Congress to authorize a White House Conference to be held between September 1, 1989 and September 30, 1991. NCLIS is charged with planning and conducting WHCLIS II in cooperation with the entire library/information community.

International Activities

At the international level, NCLIS continued to advise the U.S. State Department on grants for library, information, and archives projects that further U.S. objectives in the international arena. (The grants for 1987 are reported in Part 2 of this volume.) The commission conducted an international conference in Guatemala with the objective of improving access to needed textbooks in Latin American colleges and universities. The Conference on Textbooks and Translations Standards in Latin America was attended by representatives of academic and research institutions from seven Latin American countries as well as several prominent U.S. librarians and government officials. The conference launched an effort to increase awareness of the urgent need for textbooks, particularly in certain subjects, and to address this need through enhanced textbook translation and distribution programs.

NCLIS Personnel Changes

NCLIS Chairman Kenneth Y. Tomlinson resigned in May 1987 to accept another presidential appointment and was replaced by sitting commissioner Jerald C. Newman. Newman is president of Transnational Commerce Corporation, North Woodmere, New York, and a longtime advocate and supporter of libraries and the information community. Two new commissioners joined NCLIS in 1987: Raymond J. Petersen of Connecticut and Sally Jo Vasicko of Indiana. Petersen is executive vice president of Hearst Magazines and publishing director of *Good Housekeeping*. Vasicko is chairperson and professor of political science, Ball State University. Julia Li Wu, head librarian, Virgil Junior High School, and trustee, Los Angeles Community College Board, was reappointed to the commission. Vivian J. Arterbery, NCLIS executive director since November 1986, left the commission in January 1988 to accept the position of corporate secretary at the Rand Corporation.